The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Snowdrops.

Of old, with goodwill from the skies,
The holy angels came;
They walked the earth with human eyes,
And passed away in flame.

But now the angels are withdrawn,
Because the flowers can speak;
With Christ we see the dayspring dawn
In every snowdrop meek.

God sends them forth; to God they tend;
Not less with love they burn,
That to the earth they lowly bend,
And unto dust return.

No miracle in them hath place,
For this world is their home;
An utterance of essential grace
The angel snowdrops come.

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Sad-hearted, be at peace: the snowdrop lies
Under the cold, sad earth-clods and the snow;
But spring is floating up the southern skies,
And the pale snowdrop silent waits below.

O loved if known! in dull December day
One scarce believes there is a month of June;
But up the stairs of April and of May
The dear sun climbeth to the summer's noon.

Dear mourners, I love God, and so I rest;
O better! God loves thee, and so rest thou;
He is our spring-time, our dim-visioned Best,
And He will help thee—do not fear the *How*.

GEORGE MACDONALD.

The Open Mind.

There are two intellectual vices which seriously interfere with openness of mind. One of them is mental indifference,—not caring to think about great topics, not caring which way the tide of politics turns, nor who governs the city, nor how the creeds are written, nor who suffers in the bonds of error. This selfish feeling that truth does not matter, this shrinking from personal responsibility concerning the condition of the world, is a very ignoble fault, and not made any less so by the fact that many of the wise and good fall into it. The man who does not care enough about any question over which the world disputes to take the trouble to make up his mind about it is, to say the least, a cipher in the best life of his time. When a United States senator repeatedly avoids voting on so important a matter as the silver question, and, lest he should displease some voters, tries to make it appear that he has not made up his mind about it, or is ready to favour whichever side it is that wins, that man dooms himself to early obscurity. The world wants statesmen who have positive convictions. In this strenuous age no man leads save he who has a mind of his own, and dares to express it. The men of decided opinions, the men who take a close interest in all that concerns humanity, are the ones that have an influence among us. And the rushing stream of life leaves stranded on the muddy bank of the past the souls that have

no opinion, no fine ambitions, no banners to fight for. No open mind is ever indifferent toward the thought of the day or the new and larger truth.

The other vice which destroys openness of mind is that of complete intellectual self-satisfaction, the feeling that you know the whole truth in any matter. When one holds that all religious truth is stated in the creed of his church, he sets up a barrier between himself and any larger knowledge of God. When he believes that any one book can be an infallible authority for faith, he closes his mind to all the later discoveries of earnest seekers after truth, and so ceases to be watchful for the fresh revelations that are ever coming into the world. If you think that your present ideas must remain unchanged for ever, straightway you become a bigot, and join the persecutors who have long tried to suppress the open mind. Conservatives are most exposed to this fault, but even Liberals sometimes fall into it by the very eagerness of their liberalism. To be rigidly certain that some things never can be known is as foreign to true openness of mind as to be sure that you already have the whole truth.

Avoiding, then, these two causes of spiritual narrowness, we look out into the realms beyond our present mental state, and find that what we now know compares with what is yet to be learned about as the spot where I now stand compares with the boundless sweep of space reaching out to infinity in every direction. My eyes can see only a limited distance. I can distinguish objects for a few miles around, but beyond that all things fade into a dim horizon. Shall I say that beyond that horizon there is no beauty, no life? Shall I say that beyond my present knowledge there is no truth? Or shall I grasp the invigorating thought that there is no end to truth? This idea of eternal truth need not discourage anyone. It should come to you as a blessed inspiration to constant thoughtfulness. Who will not be on the watch for truth, when he feels that the horizon may at any moment open to its bright inroads? Truth is not for the rich or the fortunate or the highly-educated alone. It gleams all around us. It is the very substance of the future into which we steadily advance, and it is given to every open mind. Truth fills earth and air and all the expanse of matter. It is the very essence of all spiritual being. And everyone who tries to live nobly must abide in truth. In fact, nothing else is so easily accessible, so all-pervading, as truth; and they who look must find it.

But, in order to avail ourselves of this blessing, we must have great docility of mind. We must remember that we are to be always learners, that there never comes a graduation day in the school of life. There never will come a time when a man can say: "This, and nothing more, is the science of geology." "This is the final step of being a Christian." "This is all there is of human duty." For one acquisition of knowledge merely makes it possible for you to reach on toward a still larger thought. Our minds can enter this splendid growth, provided we hold ourselves entirely free from prejudices. We must be willing to learn from any quarter; must live in fraternity with every race of men; must not despise the Chinese, the Indian, or the negro. We must not scorn another religious ceremonial nor another sect than our own, for all such intolerance is failure to keep the open mind.

And now having the open mind, the mind free from prejudices, tolerant, kindly, hopeful, and observant, what shall we do with it? It seems to me that it is not enough merely to be willing that there should be truth outside of our own circle, but that openness of mind involves a duty of active search on our part for the new truth we talk about. We ought to be watchmen in all concerns of the mind, lookers for light who are so enthusiastic at the thought of what is yet to be known that we search with all our might. And, when we are faithful to this duty of the spirit, we have entered into what is, either consciously or unconsciously, a religious life. I have heard men use the word "religious" as if it meant something superstitious or unprogressive. But I understand by a religious life one that is earnestly striving to put itself in harmony with all that is perfect around it. And to my idea he is the most reverent man who is the most eager to rise out of all narrowness into larger knowledge. To watch for the coming day, to believe that there is limitless truth yet to be found out, to wish to be a part of the best life of the future,—is not this reverence? I think it is. I think that any sincere expression of such desires is prayer. And I think that a moment's dwelling upon this conception of an eternal truth before us lifts one straight into a thought of God.

When the open mind of to-day bends eagerly toward the growing truth, it is doing exactly what the Psalmist did in "looking for the Lord more than watchmen look for the morning." Our search for truth is religious faith; and the only difference between the ancient Psalm writer and ourselves is that we have greater definiteness in our search. Our idea of God is broader, larger, richer, than that which the primitive world had; and our search is guided by that nobler, clearer conception. But the search is at heart the same. It is the desire of the finite to get nearer in spirit to the Infinite. No search for truth is possible save by those open minds that believe there is truth to be found. And this belief in something larger than man's present knowledge naturally carries with it the sublime conception that this object of our search is boundless and perfect. And what more can anyone mean when he says God?

Infinite perfection is God; and he who to-day by any path is seeking after truth, even some partial and limited truth, has begun to "look for the Lord." Every clear thought will bring him nearer to the thought of God. The open and watchful mind cannot fail at last to grasp the thought of the perfect order that pervades all nature, and reaches out into the future to lead that also in right ways,—the thought of a faultless meaning in the advance of this irresistible order, the thought of Infinite Perfection as the real object of all human search. We say we are looking for truth. But the fact that we are never satisfied, that we go on for ever looking for more, and yet more of truth, shows that the truth is but a part of something grander than its steady march. That perfect whole in which truth abides, in which also we must search for goodness, for love, and for all other excellent things in their completeness, may be called by any name you please. A name is merely a convenience for ready reference, and I find it most satisfactory to call this perfect whole of which I am speaking by the name "God." The time-honoured word will serve. Used in its modern sense, it will convey to others your clearest thought. Use it to signify the largest truth and highest force you can now conceive, and let its meaning enlarge whenever finer conceptions come to you. Then to you the word "God" will mean all the truth toward which you are growing, and infinitely more; all the goodness you are striving to win, and infinitely more. It will mean a perfect Power of love which manifests all truth, and is all virtue.

You see that the way by which our Church endeavours to make men religious is not by forbidding them to investigate, not by shutting up their minds with a creed, but by arousing them to independent thought. We know that everyone who thinks for himself, and ceaselessly presses onward after truth, will sooner or later rise into reverence for that truth. So we plead for the open mind. He who is willing to learn is in the way of escaping from all narrowness of spirit, all selfishness, all vice, and all ignorance. But he who cannot trust his own mind is the meek supporter of all iniquities. Through him political corruption, social evils, and spiritual ignorance run rampant in the world. We must teach such men to think, and so lead them into the joy and strength of the open mind. In this our Church does but act in harmony with the spirit of the times. Progress is in the air we breathe. In science, in art, in manufactures, the world presses onward with rapid strides. It only remains for us to show that the same advance is characteristic of theology, that in truth religion is the natural climax of all long-sustained mental progress. To this end we direct all our Church labours. Whatsoever educates the irresolute or untrained mind, whatsover sets minds free from old trammels, whatsoever makes minds yearn for growth, comes within the scope of our Church work. Thus we lay the foundations of faith. After a man has learned to reason, then he goes on with us to find out more of the Eternal.

Truly we are blessed in our mission. We do not claim a monopoly of the open mind, and we rejoice to see its fine activity in many other quarters. Yet no church has greater cause for zeal and hopefulness than ours, since we are squarely and unreservedly committed to this endeavour which is so high that it cannot fail of success. What we aim to do is to inspire men to be natural. Our follies, sins, and idleness are against nature; and as soon as any man follows the real bent of his mind he goes on to whatever strength he is capable of. So it is in the deep things of the soul. Once get a mind open, and it starts forth in search of the Eternal, like Sir Galahad after the Holy Grail. Reverence, faith, high character, and large usefulness lie along that way.—C. E. St. John.

Our Book Table.

No more delightful biography has been given to the world since the publication of "Stevenson's Letters" two year ago than the "Letters of John Richard Green*—the "Short History" Green. We say "biography" advisedly, although both books only profess to be "letters." Mr. Sidney Colvin in the one case and Mr. Leslie Stephen in the other, have followed the plan adopted years before by Mr. Stopford Brooke in his well-known "Life and Letters of Robertson, of Brighton," *i.e.*, that of allowing a man's own letters to tell as much of the story of his life as possible, linking together the various groups of letters by short narrative chapters, which tell us the salient events and incidents of his career. Not that there can be much of "incident" in the lives of scholars, historians, and divines. Unlike soldiers, statesmen, travellers, adventurers, and men of great affairs, whose lives are lived out in action, and on a public stage, before applauding and criticising crowds, the lives of thinkers and writers are passed mostly in the study, and their personality is known only to a few. What story there is to relate is mainly of early struggles, mental growth, difficulties with publishers, and the wooing and winning of the public ear. The prominent events of Green's life are soon marshalled. A poor Oxford boy, a student at one of Oxford's least distinguished colleges, a curate at Hoxton, among Sir Walter Besant's "Children of Gibeon," an East End vicar, then a quiet dropping-out of clerical harness, a "Saturday Reviewer," a popular historian, a devotee of work pursued through years of sickness and prostration, a marriage at 40 years of age, and death at 46, these are the story brightened by a number of wonderful friendships. But there is far more than the story. A quick, sensitive nature, full of talk, fun, and vivacity—Tennyson said to him at the close of a visit to Aldworth: "You're a jolly, vivid man, and I'm glad to have known you; you're as vivid as lightning,"—affectionate, with a great capacity for friendship, a hater of shams, a diligent student, caring nothing for the forms of religion but only for its essence, determined to get the last ounce of work out of himself—he comes before us in the letters an electric, palpitating man, who found it good to live, though poverty afflicted him and pain racked him. Among his devout friends were Stopford Brooke and the Humphrey Wards. His bodily weakness enabled him to drop out of Church work without remark at a time when otherwise he must have resigned on account of his growing disbelief in ancient dogmas. Mr. Stephen says of him that "he was keenly alive to the danger of being tempted by his position" (as a clergymen) "into insincerity. His genuine affection for the Church, as well as his main material interests, might betray him in that direction. He resolved that if he should be unable at any time to use the words of the Litany: 'Christ, have mercy upon us,' with perfect sincerity he would abandon the clerical character. When the time came he acted upon his resolution. He was glad, however, that the state of his health, which gave a sufficient reason for the step, made it unnecessary to set forth the other ground." The Church's loss was history's gain. The letters, like those of Stevenson, reveal a man brimming over with cheerfulness, and abound in happy things. Of the good stories we have room for only one:—"S. Brooke brought a story of old Baliol days, which Jowett had told him *apropos* of Sir John Coleridge. He was a wonderfully vain undergraduate; and little Jenkins, who was then master of Baliol, determined to tell him so. When he came up at Collections—the examination held at the end of the term—Jenkins gravely asked each of the tutors in turn what was their opinion of Mr. Coleridge? They said flattering things, and then Jenkins turned on the blushing youth: Mr. Coleridge! Mr. Tait has a very high opinion of you; Mr. Woolcombe has a very high opinion of you. Indeed, all the tutors seem to have a very high opinion of you." Then he said, meditatively, "I too have a high opinion of Mr. Coleridge! But there is one person who has a far higher opinion of Mr. Coleridge than either I or Mr. Tait or the rest of the tutors—and that person is Mr. Coleridge himself!" If our readers want a pleasant book, which will introduce them to a very fine character, whom to know even in cold print is something of a liberal education, let them buy or borrow this volume of "Letters."

If the life of Green is devoid of striking

* "Letters of John Richard Green." Edited by Leslie Stephen. —*Macmillan and Co.*

incidents, what shall be said of John Hamilton Thom? In *A Minister of God** Mr. Valentine Davis has brought together a number of passages, *obiter dicta*, from the occasional sermons and addresses of Mr. Thom, prefaced by a short and admirable memoir of a very remarkable man. But it has no interest except for those to whom the interior life is the main thing. Mr. Thom was never a popular preacher; but he was something better, a *great and lasting spiritual force* in the lives and hearts of all who came under the influence of his ministry. In a large and true sense he was a spiritual genius,—a preacher with the loftiest conception of the preacher's office, and qualified for his work by the gift of moral and spiritual insight. It is marvellous when we consider the quiet, retired, meditative life he lived, how close he came to men plunged in the world of affairs and temptations, how true and piercing was his judgment of the activities from which he himself lived so far apart. In other days his would have been the life of a recluse. As it was his circumstances brought him both into touch with the quick, throbbing world, and enabled him, as from a place to aloft, to discern its moral drift and spiritual dangers. Settled early in life as pastor over a refined, cultured, and wealthy congregation to whom he ministered for 30 years; relieved by marriage from the burden which presses so heavily on the bulk of the ministry, pecuniary cares, his days, like his sermons, were measured and tranquil, and from his "retreat of meditation" he came forth with a message grave and sweet, pathetic and illuminating, a message which shaped in a marvellous way the characters and destinies of the special congregation drawn towards him by some magnetic affinity with his own nature. The volume before us, so skilfully edited by Mr. Davis, is largely concerned with Mr. Thom's idea of the Christian ministry, the burden of the preacher, and the place of the prophet in human life. It is a book with many heart searching questions for ministers—austere in its demands, yet an inspiring book, full of encouragement. One warning note, sounded by Mr. Thom, there is more need than ever to emphasise,—that the preacher, the prophet, in our modern churches is in danger of being swallowed up in the mere man of affairs, in benevolent and sanitary and educational activities, in committees and societies and the multiplicity of institutions, which have come to be part and parcel of the life of the church. Whatever demands societies and committees and enterprises of practical benevolence, and social reforms, and philanthropic agencies may make on a minister these are not his *raison d'etre*; all these can be managed just as well by the laity, and are just as much their duty as his. "It is the preaching of the word which is the distinctive weapon of the minister of religion—it is the pulpit which is his seat of power, and to that he must subordinate everything else and devote all his energies." "To use it worthily, to make it powerful, is the *special* work of his life." Everything else in a church could be carried on without him—sacraments, poor funds, science classes, even the conduct of worship—but the prophet is on another plane, and must have special gifts and special training. It is the pulpit which is the distinctive function of the minister—"the realisation in silence and prayers, what Christ meant by the Kingdom of God on earth, and the presentation of it to the consciences and affections of men, so as to engage their souls and bodies; the perpetual elevation before their eyes of the tabernacle in the heavens. If he does not excel in this, he is nowhere at all as distinct from any other man—that what he professes to supply is the administration of the Word, the truth, the light, the life of God, borne to the innermost consciences of men—that society looks to him specially for this, and this only—and that if he has not this to give, his occupation is gone, his office forfeited." That there is another side of the matter we are well aware. Mr. Thom's peculiar experience did not cover the whole of ministerial life and activity—even that which may be reasonably expected of a prophet. Nevertheless, his warning against substituting feverish activities for a prophetic message needs to be uttered now as then.

* "A Minister of God: Selections from J. H. Thom." Edited, with a Memoir, by V. D. Davis, B.A. London: *Philip Green.*

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The new volume of *The Helper*, edited by the Rev. W. G. Tarrant, and published by the Sunday School Association, is more than equal to its predecessors, and splendidly answers to its title. A Sunday School teacher with the *Helper*

in his hands can be at no loss for vivid, interesting lessons—his only difficulty will be to choose from the wealth of matter offered him. We would especially commend the notes of lessons prepared by the editor on "The Holy City," by Mr. Timmis on "The Bible," by F. Talbot on "The Most Precious Thing in the World," by Mr. Robinson on "Leaves," and the Editor's "Bible Lessons for the Year." These are rich in just the kind of material and help so many of our teachers require.

Stray Thoughts.

Let us always remember that *Life Itself* is greater than any thoughts we may have about it. Whether we be optimistic or pessimistic, the ultimate Reality is sure to be something different from either. This consideration will leave us with an horizon—a sense of more to be discovered up to the extremest verge of life, and will save us from the weariness which comes of accepting one's own generalisations as the final Truth.

When things have conspired to depress us, so that we take (reasonably, as it seems) the most entirely pessimistic view of life, it is still possible to say with truth, "This is *my* view, but Life and Universe are greater than this." As it would be necessary to know the whole truth as to the Infinite, to which we are akin, before we could have any certainty that our prospects justified us in despairing, and that whole Truth is impossible of attainment, Despair is a false and illogical position. For despair presupposes certainty of evil, and that we can never have. Taken at the lowest estimate, there is at least as much reason for Hope as for fear; but perhaps on the whole the wisest attitude is that of acquiescence in whatever exists:—the Infinite, which we can dimly apprehend, but cannot measure with our present faculties.

"In la sua volontade è nostra pace."

* * * * * * *

Though our present use of education does indeed create a very superficial kind of difference between us and the uneducated, there is yet an enormous gap between them and us in our possession of all the potential *resources* implied in education. *They* are shut out by want of leisure and want of training from vast unexplored fields of thought and activity; *we* have the leisure and the training, but have we yet used them to discover any more than a small fraction of the resources which education might place in our hands for the infusion of a truer life into the community? The question of the day, so it seems to me, in the solution of which will lie the only true counteracting force to the tide of capitalism on the one hand, and socialism, with its narrow ideal of material prosperity as an end in itself, on the other—is, firstly, how we educated people can apply all the enormous resources conferred on us through education so as to improve the existing evil social conditions in which certain misdirected forces of civilisation have involved us; secondly, how the gap between rich and poor may be bridged over—how the hard manual work of the world may be more equalised, so that the "working classes" shall have sufficient leisure and training to work side by side with us towards an intelligent solution of the social problem. Toynbee Hall is an effort in the right direction in recognising, as it does, that education should be brought to bear upon modern conditions of life in our great cities, and yet I often think that many of the men there are too apt to look upon it as a panacea in itself for all the degradation around them, without having grasped the truth that this University culture is only the *foundation* on which they must build social aims dealing with existing conditions, if they wish to touch the root of the matter and help others to do so. What the Universities want—what clever and cultivated people all the world over want—is the knowledge of how to apply the resources at their command to the tangled skein of civilisation. Science and Religion are each too partial in their answers to satisfy the wants of the twentieth century. With the student—the cultivated layman—the great responsibility rests of fusing the conclusions of both into some rational yet transcendental whole, capable of satisfying both the heart and the intellect of the world groping in darkness, perplexed by counter-claims of Secularist and religious fanatic, and vast undisciplined forces of material civilisation.

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It is a well-worn theme, but cannot be too often repeated, that "prevention is better than cure." It has often been said that we manufacture crime, disease, and poverty, and then spend our immense resources in the futile attempt to cure them, while the very nature of

the cure augments the evil; but how slow we are to act upon this knowledge! We allow our social conditions to foster a number of incompetent parents, and then spend vast sums in prisons for their children; we allow bad airs and want of exercise to enfeeble the health of our artisans, and then support hospitals which send them back into the same unhealthy conditions; we allow our Mammon-worship, our degraded ideal of marriage—in a word, all the false fabric of our modern life—to manufacture a number of ne'er-do-weels physical and mental, and then support them in our oddly-misnamed workhouses. But though any candid person must sorrowfully admit that such is the fact, how little attempt we have as yet made to divert our immense flood of "charity" into the right and useful channels! The question is beset with difficulties, and the more one thinks of it, the more one is driven to the conclusion that we have far less need of *money* to apply to the causes of these evils than of moral and spiritual influences brought to bear upon them. This conclusion is in one respect encouraging, since it seems to point to the possibility of a "lull in the hot chase" for wealth if truer ideas can be brought to prevail on these matters; but at the same time, while we continue in a transition period between the false cure and the true one, we cannot afford to despise the agency of money, if only as a means of spreading our faith. As a first step in the right direction, I think any clear-headed person would be doing great service by preparing a statement showing what is spent approximately each year on charities, and those forms of taxation which may be called enforced charities, and under each head, such as crime, poverty, disease, pauperism, and the present means taken to cure it, setting forth the real cause of the evil, so far as it is possible to discern it, and a suggestion for diverting the sums at present spent on a fruitless cure into some channel which should affect the cause itself, giving at the same time a rough estimate of the amount which would be set free by this process. Of course, it would as yet only be possible to give a very rough outline of the ways in which money could be applied so as to touch the root of the difficulty, but the mere attempt to do so would be of much use in shaking people out of the complacent belief that when they give their money to charities they have done the best in their power by the social difficulty.—DOROTHEA HOLLINS.

Christian Socialism.*

If you want to understand what is Christian Socialism turn your attention to that series of teachings of Christ's which we call parables—comparisons, that is to say, between what Christ saw going on in the everyday world around Him and the Kingdom of Heaven. If by the Kingdom of Heaven in these parables is meant a place up in the clouds, or merely a state in which people will be after death, then I challenge you to get any kind of meaning out of them whatever. But if by the Kingdom of Heaven is meant (as it is clear from other parts of Christ's teaching is the case), the righteous society to be established upon earth, then they all have a plain and beautiful meaning: a meaning well summed up in that saying, so often quoted against us by the sceptic and the atheist, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you:" or, in other words, Live, Christ said, all of you together, not each of you by himself; live as members of the righteous society which I have come to found upon earth, and then you will be clothed as beautifully as the Eastern lily and fed as surely as the birds. Well, we have lived, as you know, on the opposite principle to this; we have lived on the principle of every man for himself and the devil take the hindermost; we have lived as rivals and competitors instead of living as brothers, labourer competing against labourer, artisan against artisan, shopkeeper against shopkeeper, trader against trader; with the result that very few of us are clothed beautifully and many of us not fed surely. Christian Socialists, therefore, say that it would be worth while to try the experiment, which such an one as Jesus Christ said would succeed, to try and live in a rational, organised, orderly brotherhood, believing that then only, but then most certainly, all the men and women and children of England shall be fed surely and clothed beautifully.

Or look for a moment at two of the parables a little more in detail. Take one of the few parables in which Christ spoke about Hell. For though He did not speak of Hell so much as some of His modern followers do, it is important to bear in mind that He was not only the Jesus meek and gentle of whom some of you may have sung in your childhood, but also the Jesus stern and angry; He had His eight woes

**From a Lecture to Working Men, by the Rev. S. D. Headlam, M.A.*

as well as His eight blessings; He had fierce denunciations for those who, as He phrased it, devoured widows' houses and for pretence made long prayers; for those who made the Sabbath-day a dull, dreary day by their narrow rules and restrictions; for those who had the key of knowledge and would not enter into the treasure house themselves, and hindered those who wished to enter in from entering. Yes, even He had language which some superfine people would call outrageous, ungentlemanly, when He sent that message to the king of His country, calling him a jackal—a word of the utmost contempt when we remember that the jackal was the natural scavenger of the Eastern city. We need not be surprised, then, that He who at the right time could be so righteously angry, now and again spoke about Hell.

But who, according to Jesus Christ, was the man who was in Hell? It was the rich man who was in Hell; and why was he in Hell? Not simply because he was rich, for Christ said it was possible, though difficult, for a rich man to enter into His society. No; the rich man was in Hell simply because he allowed the contrast between rich and poor to go on as a matter of course, day after day, without taking any kind of pains to put a stop to it. That, according to Christ, was the worst state into which it was possible for a man to fall.

Or take another parable, the parable of the Sheep and the Goats, or the parable of Judgment. In it, if you remember, Christ summoned before His imagination all the nations of the world for judgment; and it is important to note that it was nations and not merely individuals who were summoned by Christ to judgment; for you cannot be a good Christian merely by being good in private life, or domestic life: you must be a good citizen in order to be a good Christian: and so it was nations, and not merely individuals, who were summoned to judgment. And what, according to Christ, did the goodness of a nation consist of? That nation, according to Christ, was good, not which said "Lord! Lord!" most, which was most eager about outward worship or formal religion, but which took care to see that its people were properly clothed, fed, and housed, which looked after those who were in difficulty and distress; and even in the case of those who said they did not know God, who would call themselves or be called by others Atheists, Jesus Christ said that if they were taking pains to see that the people were properly clothed, fed, and housed, however much they might say that they did not know God, God knew them and claimed them as His. Now, what I have to suggest is that modern English Christians need not presume to be more religious than Jesus Christ was; and if He said that the goodness of a nation consisted in seeing that the people were properly clothed, fed, and housed, then surely it is the bounden duty of every minister of Christ, from the Archbishop of Canterbury down to the humblest Sunday-school teacher, to be doing their best to see that the men, women, and children of England are properly clothed, fed, and housed. I hope, then, that I have said sufficient to make it clear that, so far as Christ's works and teachings are concerned, not only is there no contradiction between the adjective "Christian" and the noun "Socialism," but that, if you want to be a good Christian, you must be something very much like a good Socialist.

The Seed Sower.

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Special terms for churches taking 50 copies and above.

The new Volume will begin on March 1st. Every effort will be made not only to maintain the *Seed Sower* at a high level of literary ability, but also to increase its interest and usefulness to the churches. Among the new features for the coming year we have arranged for a monthly summary of denominational news, and a monthly letter on the Liberal Movement in Christendom generally, in each case by ministers of high position in our churches. We have also arranged for the following:—

Bible Class Lessons, by the Rev. Henry Gow, B.A.;
"Noble Women" (with portraits), Rev. F. K. Freeston;
"Parables in Great Pictures," Rev. E. I. Fripp, B.A.;
and sermons by many of our best preachers. Among other contributors for the New Year we have pleasure in announcing George Macdonald, Revs. S. A. Brooke, M.A., R. A. Armstrong, B.A., C. Hargrove, M.A., E. W. Lummis, M.A., and E. L. H. Thomas, M.A.

The *Seed Sower* is admirably adapted for localising, and facilities are provided for that purpose. The circulation is already larger than that of any other magazine or journal published to meet the wants of our Free Churches. It gives a larger amount of matter, and every increase of circulation will be used to secure increased efficiency.

All business communications should be addressed to—
MR. ARNOLD WOOD,
WHITEHALL CHAMBERS, COLMORE ROW,
BIRMINGHAM.
Letters for the Editor to be sent to 120, Gough Road, Birmingham.

Editorial.

A sign of the times is to be discerned in Dr. R. F. Horton's Christmas deliverance on the incredibility of the Virgin Birth. He pointed out that St. Paul, whose letters ante-dated any of the Gospel writers, never, even minutely, referred to that alleged and startling event. Paul never seems to have heard of it, and if he had, attached no doctrinal importance to it. Mark, our second earliest authority, begins not with the infancy, but the manhood of Jesus; while John, whose whole Gospel turned on the Incarnation, makes not the slightest allusion to the Virgin Birth. Now, we cannot imagine Paul, Mark, and John all omitting something essential to the Gospel they preached. Matthew and Luke are the only two New Testament writers who mention that great miracle, and even their writings do not agree. All this, so ably expounded and clearly stated by Dr. Horton, does not shake his faith in the orthodox doctrine of the person of Christ, but it compels him to rest it on other grounds. Yet the difference of the Virgin Birth cannot but have a modifying effect on the doctrine which was supposed to be bound up with it. It is significant that in the Congregational body three such prominent men as Dr. Horton, Dr. Hunter, and "J. B.," of the *Christian World*, should be compelled to set the miraculous conception aside.

We have already called attention to Dr. Parker's scheme for federating the Congregational Churches by reorganising them as "the United Congregational Church." Whether the scheme fails or succeeds, it cannot but be a most instructive object lesson for our churches, which labour under exactly the same difficulties, and feel the same needs. The Committee of the Congregational Union have now issued a circular to the churches asking for their consideration of the scheme. They preface the request by a statement of what appears to them to be the line and the limit of federation. The autonomy of each church is to be untouched. The election of minister and officers, the admission of members, the conditions of membership, the financial arrangements, these and the like are still to remain within the province of the individual church. But such questions as the recognition by the denomination of each minister elected, the introduction into ministry of suitable men, the arrangement and possible amalgamation of the colleges, the assistance given to smaller churches, the administration of Congregational funds, old-age pensions for ministers, the conduct of missions, etc., might, it is suggested, be under the control of the church as a whole, instead of resting in the hands of separate independent committees. At present there is no proposal for a common fund for the *support* of the ministry as in Presbyterian Churches. It is evidently felt that the federation scheme cannot be carried all at once by a *coup de main*. (That was one of the rocks on which Dr. Martineau's schemes foundered). Federation will have to be approached gradually and tentatively.

We trust our own churches will not be afraid to look the problem in the face. We may readily admit that the question is not ripe for any revolutionary change, and that the time has not arrived for any attempt at federation, without concluding that nothing can be now attempted. A first step has already been taken by the National Conference in the adoption of a constitution which makes it a thoroughly representative body—representative that is of the churches. The next step is to bring the Conference into frequent and personal touch with the churches by means of a permanent secretary who shall give his whole time to the work, devoting himself not only or merely to secretarial duties, but to the mission and other efforts of the churches generally as a kind of "Pastor at Large." Immense benefit would be conferred on our churches by the visits, counsels, and stimulus of an able and trusted minister set apart for general service. He himself would be one of the first links in a more vital union between the churches. The hope of our churches for the future lies largely in strengthening the hands of the Conference.

The successful establishment of the Superannuation Fund by the Conference is an earnest of its possibilities of service. Much of the credit is, of course, due to the Rev. J. E. Carpenter, the President of the Conference, whose splendid labours cannot be too highly estimated, and to whom churches and ministers alike owe an immense debt of gratitude. He has stumped the country for the fund from Exeter to Aberdeen, from Norwich to Belfast, and he has successfully practised what a

mining journal describes as "a method for extracting gold from reluctant ores." But Mr. Carpenter would be the first to acknowledge that his chances of success would have been minimised immensely had he not spoken as representing the authority and approval of churches in Conference.

Great and pressing work lies before the Conference in bringing our scattered and lonely churches into more vital fellowship with each other, in raising the standard of ministerial remuneration, in quickening into new life churches that now have a name to live and are dead, in wisely promoting the concentration of different funds and societies all having the same objects in view. We waste our funds and scatter our energies over a profusion of efforts and institutions which would be more economically and more efficiently administered by the adoption of the principle of concentration. We lose so much by *sprawling* when we might gain so much by gathering ourselves into compact masses.

Unitarian and other Liberal Thinkers on the Incarnation.

There exists among Unitarians an impression, widely held, to the effect that the only admissible sense in which the theological term "Incarnation" may be used is that which harmonises with the conceptions of the orthodox creeds,—the sense in which that term is exclusively applicable to the person of Jesus Christ. It is currently supposed that any wider use of the term constitutes in effect an abuse of language, and that Unitarians in particular ought to be the last persons to be guilty of such an abuse. Widely spread as are these various impressions, we believe them to be entirely without foundation in fact, and their opposites to be easily provable to those whose minds are open to proof; and the simplest method of proof will be to bring together a number of quotations from Unitarian and other liberal religious thinkers, showing that a wider than the orthodox interpretation, both of the doctrine and the term "Incarnation," is not merely permissible, but has been and is being as a matter of fact practised by numbers of responsible writers and teachers in our own and other religious communities.

Let it be premised that by the Incarnation we understand a universal spiritual fact, viz., the indwelling of the Spirit of God in all men; by the *Christian* doctrine of the Incarnation we mean the belief that this indwelling which, though universal, admits of many different degrees, took place in a supreme degree in the person of Jesus Christ, who therefore became the supreme revelation of God to mankind. The name which we may give to that doctrine is, of course, in itself indifferent; we propose, however, to adhere to the name Incarnation in preference to coining a new term, because this one is already well-known, and its use in the wider sense has, as will be seen, the sanction of no inconsiderable number of thinkers.

* * * * *

"Most Unitarians regard the Incarnation as the central truth of Christianity."—Rev. Dr. A. P. Peabody.

"The liberal orthodox mind reckons divinity in terms of humanity just as Unitarians do, for the human mind cannot do otherwise; but it is the increasing delight of the new orthodoxy to do this with reference to Christ.—Now from our side: *shallow in mind and contracted of heart is that Unitarian who does not increasingly recognise "Incarnation" as one of the supreme words of religion, ranking next to "God" itself in majesty of significance.*"—Rev. William C. Gannett.

"Alone in all history, Jesus Christ estimated the greatness of man. One man was true to what is in you and me. He saw that God incarnates Himself in man, and evermore goes forth anew to take possession of His world. He said in this jubilee of sublime emotion, 'I am divine—through me God acts; through me speaks. Would you see God, see me; or see thee, when thou also thinkest as I now think.'" R. W. Emerson, Address, 1838. (Prefixed by the Rev. Charles Hargrove to a sermon on "The Imitation of Christ.").

"This Word of God, says the prologue of the Fourth Gospel, 'became flesh,' and in the person of Jesus of Nazareth was seen and felt and heard of men; and died not when he died, but has ever since tarried among men, and been known of them as He could not be before, in that they realised that He is truly human not less than divine, 'the highest, holiest manhood,' Son of God and Son of Man. . . . The disciples of Jesus . . . conquered the empire . . . . the preachers of a new and foolish faith; but it was faith in a living Spirit, not a dead teacher; and that that Spirit was real, and not merely a creation of their imaginations, the triumphant result showed."—The Rev. Charles Hargrove, M.A., in a sermon on "The Christ Always With Us."

"God may be more than personal, but He is personal to us in Jesus."—Rev. Stopford Brooke.

"It is through man that God has always revealed Himself. All we know of God we know

through man, and it was fitting, if God loved us, that mankind, in the midst of imperfect revelations, should have at least one perfect disclosure of His character and of His love to us—one of us who could say with full conviction, 'The works I do, the words I speak, are the Father's works and words; I and my Father are one.' . . . 'Live with me in the simplicity of Light and Love,' saith your God; 'Turn to my Son, in whom I lived for you, and say, Lord to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of Eternal Life.'"—Rev. STOPFORD BROOKE, Sermon preached before the International Council of Unitarians and other Liberal Thinkers, 1901.

"We believe, then, not in an Incarnation that confines itself to one historic character. I believe, rather, that God is progressively incarnating Himself in the human race. . . . . As the years go by, God is more and more to become incarnate in the human race. The significant and central thought, to my mind, in the character and life of Jesus is his consciousness of oneness with the Father."—Rev. M. J. SAVAGE, D.D., in "Our Unitarian Gospel."

"There is an original word of the Spirit spoken to every soul of man, and the incarnate Word shews us to what end God speaks it."—Rev. JOHN HAMILTON THOM, "Christ the Revealer," p. 159.

"The relations we hold to the Son are fundamentally different, different in kind, from the relations we hold to the Father, though without the Son in whom the Father was well pleased, we never should have known the full glory of a child of God. The One is the Inspirer, the Breather of the divine word in and to the soul: the other is its incarnation, its human impersonation."—IBID., p. 158.

"We wanted, then, what God in Christ has given us, a Spirit that . . . could collect in one living Character all the lineaments of God that are in us, and so hold before us the Divine Image in the full power of its attraction.—IBID., p. 123.

"This is the power and function of Christ. This, indeed, is the great Atonement. This is the harmony of the Divine Character itself which men never could conceive until in Christ they saw the Image of it in human nature."—IBID., p. 115.

"The birth stories are no more necessary to our Christian belief than they were to Paul's. . . . We find from the New Testament sources, accurately read, that the New Testament Christians conceived of the Incarnation as a spiritual process, their idea of it springing from their personal experience of Christ. But what was Christ's own idea of it? Again we say, a spiritual one. Into the depths of that unique consciousness, which enabled him with such assurance to say, 'I and my Father are one,' it is impossible for us to penetrate, but we know enough to say that the relation here was, and could be no other than, of spirit to spirit."—Rev. JOHN BRIERLEY ("J. B.," of the *Christian World*).

"There are others, of whom I own myself one, who look upon Christ as the most signal manifestation of that infusion of the human with the Divine which is a universal fact. . . . Christ is . . . the perfected type of a process which is begun in every man, yet complete in none. He is the most signal proof of the fact that God is not only about us and above us, but in us. . . . He is most truly man who stands in closest union with God."—Rev. CHARLES BEARD, LL.D., in a lecture on "Jesus Christ."

"Here is a most hopeful sign of progress in modern theology. No one can fail to notice that the Incarnation is assuming in theological preaching and teaching the place which not long ago was taken by the Atonement. . . . Let us say boldly that the Incarnation, that is, the life and death of the Christ, is the identification of the human and the divine life.—Archdeacon WILSON, "The Gospel of the Atonement," pp. 88-9.

"Just because the Eternal Life of God was manifested in Jesus Christ, therefore that same Life of God is also diffused, shared, at least potentially, among all men, and only needs the begetting again, the awakening, to make them the actual, conscious possessors of that Eternal Life."—IBID., p. 58.

"In Christ man's essential unity with the divine nature is made evident, and can never again be called in question."—IBID., p. 69.

"Christ's incarnation is not an isolated and abnormal wonder. It was God's witness to the true and ideal relation of all men to God.—Dr. DALE, of Birmingham. (Quoted by Dr. Washington Gladden).

[To be continued].

Exaggerated Oratory.

One of the heroes of my youth was the great Daniel O'Connell, as popular in Liberal circles in England as in his native land. He was the beau ideal of a popular orator. Nature had fitted him for the part he had to play. Physically he was a fine man, with splendid voice, an immense command of language, and a power of invective and a sense of humour that always gained him not merely a ready hearing but vehement applause. One, however, could never tell whether he was in earnest or only poking fun at you. I am speaking, of course, of his speeches on English platforms. As you caught a glimpse of his twinkling eye it always seemed to me he was laughing at his audience—on whom he played—as Disraeli tells us Sir Robert Peel always played upon the House of Commons as if it were an old fiddle. The public have a wonderful sympathy with exaggerated oratory. A calm, philosophical statement has little effect on an average audience. People want excitement, and exaggerated language, at the time when it comes

flowing from an orator's lips, is always exciting. John O'Neill Daunt, who was one of the fifteen members of the Repeal Association enrolled on the first day of its existence, gives us an amusing illustration of the great Dan's wonderful gift of exaggeration. O'Connell used to say of Fergus O'Connor, the leader of the English Chartists, that he exaggerated so enormously that he destroyed the effect of his statements. Alas! the great Dan did too often the same. Once at Athlone, in the very centre of the flattest part of Ireland, he exclaimed, in the peroration of one of his exciting harangues, "Look, my friends, on the majestic mountains," etc., a request compliance with which would have severely tested the optics of his audience. Another time, when boasting at the Corn Exchange, Dublin, of a meeting he had recently addressed in Kilkenny, he began by stating the number present at 50,000, and "who will deny," he continued, "that the cause must be important and the purpose strong that could assemble together those 50,000 men. Let no man say that they gathered together merely from a feeling of personal regard on my account. It would be absurd to suppose that 100,000 men would leave their homes to look at an elderly and rather corpulent gentleman. No, sir, when that peaceful army of 150,000 Irishmen congregated round me their presence spoke trumpet-tongued their firm resolution never to desert from the struggle until Ireland should have her own Parliament again, and their multitudinous masses were as orderly and pacific as they were resolute and determined. Oh, with what unspeakable delight do I not rejoice in the conduct of those 200,000 noble fellows," etc. And thus the orator sailed along on the swelling tide of his imagination till he stated that at least 3,000,000 men were present on the occasion referred to. Alas! it was by such extravagance that so much of the weakness was associated with the Liberator's career, and that the mission on which he had entered proved a failure. Alas! such exaggeration is not confined to Ireland; it flourishes on English platforms as well. Only the other day a friend of mine—a man for whom I have the profoundest esteem—was addressing an audience on the evils of smoking tobacco—a habit which, he assured his excited audience, led to the loss in England alone of 20 million lives a year—a statement the absurdity of which is manifest at once when in sober print. Tobacco smoking may be a bad habit—it may have a bad effect—but the smoker merely laughs, as he fills another pipe, at such vague and wild declamation. As regards myself, I must own I have never felt such an inclination to drink as after some of the teetotal meetings, which it has been my duty to attend. Said a reporter to me, "I have to attend all the May Meetings, and I am a Christian still." It is difficult to over-estimate the mischief done by exaggeration on the platform. The hearer is apt to regard the whole harangue as open to suspicion, merely because in the natural excitement of the moment a statement, not exactly founded on fact, had been allowed to appear. An orator aims at creating an impression, and if in earnest is at times apt to exaggerate. An enthusiastic audience is a great excitement to a speaker to overstep the proper line. Even in the pulpit this has been found to be the case. I remember a story of a worthy divine in Scotland who was so conscious of this tendency to exaggerate that he engaged his clerk to admonish him by a whistle when, in the excitement of the moment, his language had a tendency to outstrip the real facts of the case. I have often felt that if some one near the platform might now and then give an admonitory whistle it might save the speaker from exaggeration, gain more real support for his cause, and at the same time be a relief to the audience as well.

C. C.

The Guild Movement.

The Conference Guilds Union has just issued its first Year Book.* The editor is the Rev. John Ellis, Secretary of the Union, who has done his work exceedingly well. The book contains an account of all the Guilds in existence, giving their time of meeting, and the special features of the work severally carried on. Twenty-three Guilds have now joined the Union, having nearly 1300 members. Twelve Guilds have not yet seen their way clear to unite in fellowship, but we trust their hesitation will soon be removed. Seven new Guilds have been formed since last October. The Year Book contains articles by the Rev. W. H. Drummond, B.A., and the Rev. Joseph Wood, on "Topics

* "The Guilds Union Year Book, 1902." *Sunday School Association, Essex Hall.*

for Guild Meetings," and "How to form and carry on a Guild." An interesting and valuable feature for Guild members will be found in the "Devotional Readings for every day in the month," an admirable selection of great thoughts from great writers, each day's reading setting forth various aspects of one truth and concluding with a collect. Many others, besides members of Guilds, will find these daily readings a source of spiritual help. The Year Book is capitally got up, and we have pleasure in commending it to our readers.

The New Science.

"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?"

That was in the later dawn:
Then I was where now I am,—
In thy bosom; there before
Time's first planet proudly swam
Into space, and back of then,
In the darkness thick and long,
Closer was I knit with thee
Than the music with the song.

Strange my fortunes since have been,
Bathed in fire, in floods congealed,
In the nebulous mass aglow,
In the ardent planet wheeled:
From the shapeless, slow but sure,
Taking shapes with beauty rife;
From the senseless clod at length
Plucking out the heart of life.

Upward, onward, striving still
Through the elemental forms;
Cradled in the monster trees,
Rocked by earthquakes, nursed by storms;
Out of weakness growing strong,
Working still the heavenly plan,
Learning what the beast must do
Ere he finds himself a man.

From the plant that useless grows,
Making corn for daily bread;
From the fear of stock and stone,
Homeward to the Father led;
Those with whom in ages gone
Red of hand I hotly strove
Taking to a brother's arms
With the awful might of love.

Never severed from thy heart,
Never parted from thy side,
Still as in the later dawn
In thy bosom I abide:
Still, as in the early dark,
Ere the worlds began to be,
Thou, my God, and I are one,
Thou in me and I in thee.

JOHN W. CHADWICK.

Topics for Guild Meetings.

BY REV. W. H. DRUMMOND, B.A.

THE question is often asked, especially to those who have had little experience in Guild work, what subjects should be discussed at our meetings? The following short paper is meant to contain some hints and suggestions of a practical kind in answer to this question. It will leave one aspect of Guild work entirely out of account. It will say nothing of philanthropy and corporate Christian service. Those are of great importance, but they do not enter into the scope of this paper. The first step is to have a real belief in the mutual advantage of common Bible study, and the frank interchange of thought on religious subjects; the next is to decide that the aim of this common thought shall be always positive and constructive. This latter point is one of great importance. Religious sympathy is quickened among the members of a Guild not by the criticism of our neighbour's opinions or the smart repartee of theological controversy. The mind should be encouraged to come into fresh contact with the divine facts of history and life, and to express itself with frank sincerity in terms of its own experience.

I.

A very useful series of conversations on these lines may be held on the Lord's Prayer. It is a good subject to begin upon because the ground is familiar. On the first evening the minister may give a short address on prayer and the scope of the Lord's Prayer. This would then be followed on successive evenings by short papers by different members dealing with the prayer clause by clause.

a. The Father in heaven: meaning of the New Testament teaching about the Fatherhood of God.

b. The hallowing of God's name: in thought and desire, in speech, and in action.

c. The coming of the kingdom and the doing of the Divine Will: these two petitions belong together. The personal and social duties involved in all sincere use of this prayer will suggest themselves for special treatment.

d. The prayer for daily bread: our dependence upon God for life and breath and all things.

e. The forgiveness of sins, and the special

condition attached that we ourselves must have the forgiving temper.

f. Deliverance from evil: the natural cry of the human heart beset by weakness and temptation.

II.

Another series of topics of great interest may be found in the Church and its Worship.

a. The individual value of public worship.

b. The social value of public worship.

c. Some modern objections to public worship and reasons for its neglect.

d. What can we do to make our worship more hopeful and attractive? This will give opportunity for practical suggestions if there is any slovenliness in management, or want of hearty fellowship and co-operation in the church, or the congregational singing is poor, without volume and warmth. Emphasize the right use of the word *attractive*. The way to give attraction to a Christian church is not by advertisement and the copying of worldly methods; it must come through the depth and power of its worship and message. It is real life, and not its clever imitation, that draws.

If the interest is still maintained, this topic may be continued for a few evenings longer, in order to consider the special services of the Church.

a. The seasons of the Christian year, their meaning for us, and why we should observe them.

b. Baptism: dwell specially on what it may mean for us as the recognition and dedication of the newly-born, a symbolic incorporation into the spiritual fellowship of all Christian believers.

c. The Communion: here, too, the aim should be to bring out the richness of its meaning, not merely as a venerable Christian tradition, but as a living means of grace for all who in the fellowship of Jesus Christ wish to lead a "dedicated life." Among young people it is well to be careful not to surround the Communion service with an over-strained solemnity. It is a Eucharist, an act of thanksgiving. It has as much meaning for those who look forward as for those who look backward. It is the symbol not merely of a great memory, but of the strength and life and joy which are ours in Christ to-day.

d. Confirmation: would such a service be helpful in our church life, and if so, what form should it take?

III.

Consecutive Bible study will be found interesting and helpful when Guild meetings are held fairly often. For the time being the Guild may regard itself as a Reading Circle. Some book should be adopted, a certain portion read carefully at home, and then at the meeting questions may be asked about difficulties, and an exposition given by one of the members of the spiritual thought and teaching of the passage. Let it, however, be reading of the Bible itself. There is a good deal of superficial acquaintance with critical theories at the present time, and considerable ignorance of the real text of the sacred writings. The Guild may help its members by cultivating habits of reverent study to recover the religious use of the Bible which in many of them has been probably weakened if not entirely lost. In this connection the attractive and well-equipped volumes of the Century Bible [price 2*s.* each] will be found very useful. St. Matthew or Dr. Horton's admirable volume on the Pastoral Epistles may be cordially recommended. Probably every opinion expressed in those books may not win our assent, while some important questions are looked at from a point of view slightly different from that to which some who read this paper are accustomed, but on the whole it is a great advantage to have a book which challenges some of our opinions and forces us to think. Attention may be called to the volumes of the Temple Bible which Messrs. Dent have just begun to issue. They have some attractive pictures, and the introductions have been entrusted to competent scholars; but the absence of a commentary makes them less suitable for the purpose in view. The Biblical volumes published by the Sunday School Association must not be forgotten. Many Guild members will know them already in connection with Sunday school teaching. The present writer is inclined, however, to recommend some volumes of the Century Bible as on the whole the best for the devotional study of Scripture without the undue intrusion of the critical element, which may form such a valuable element in developing the religious life of the Guild.

Religious Honesty.

In the writings of the distinguished Frances Anne Kemble appears the following record: "I am just come from church, where the Psalms of the day made me sick. How can one utter, without shuddering, such sentences as 'Let them be confounded and put to shame that seek after my soul. . . Let their way be dark and slippery, and let the angel of the Lord persecute them.' Is it not dreadful to think that one must say as I did, 'God forbid,' while my eye rested on the terrible words contained in the appointed Psalm of the day; or utter in God's house that to which one attaches no signification; or, worst of all, connect in any way such sentiments with one's feelings, and repeat, with lips that confess Christ, curses for which his blessed command has substituted blessings."

Is it impiety or is it piety to attempt, as Unitarianism is doing, to purge religion; to set aside the imprecatory Psalms and say, "These are not God's word, they cannot be, they are only man's imperfect and unworthy thoughts about God in darker ages?" Is it impiety, or is it not rather the noblest piety, that seeks to strip our liturgies and Scripture readings of everything that degrades the character of God?

Miss Kemble goes on to say that this subject came up in the conversation one evening at Dean Milman's, and she asked Mrs. Milman if she joined in the repetition of such dreadful passages when she came to them in the church service. Here is the reply as Miss Kemble records it: "Mrs. Milman answered with much simplicity, like a good woman and faithful clergywoman as she is, 'Oh, yes, but then you know one never means what one says;' which, in spite of our company consisting chiefly of 'witty churchmen,' elicited from it a universal burst of laughter!"

A universal burst of laughter! indeed!—at the thought of turning a religious service into a farce, not to say a blasphemy, by habitually repeating in connection with it things which one does not believe, and some things so dreadful and God dishonouring that reason, heart and conscience alike revolt at the thought of them! Alas! we little realize how large and important is the work that Unitarianism has to do in teaching our age not only higher views of God and life, but simple honesty and truthfulness in religious utterances and worship.

News from the Field.

THE CHURCH AT COLNE has declined to accept the Rev. T. Leyland's resignation, tendered on account of ill-health, and has released him from duty for six months, in the hope that a complete and prolonged rest may enable him to resume work with his old vigour. This has been made possible by the kindness of the Rev. C. J. Street in offering to find pulpit supplies for half-a-year without expense to the congregation.

THE REV. R. H. GREAVES entered on his ministry at Highgate on Sunday, January 12th, with every prospect of success.

MOSS SIDE, MANCHESTER.—The Rev. Charles Roper and Mrs. Roper have been presented with a handsome cheque in appreciation of their services on behalf of the erection of the new church.

CHOWBENT.—Nineteen members of the Guild have been received as members into the Church

REV. JOSEPH HARRISON, formerly of Percy Street Church, Preston, died on Sunday at Starnthwaite. He was forty-five years of age, and entered the ministry in 1879. He had been in indifferent health for some time. Four years ago his Preston congregation sent him to the Canary Islands, as he was suffering from phthisis. He returned little better, however, and lately he has resided in the Lake District, where he subjected himself to the open-air treatment for consumption. Prior to going to Preston he was at Accrington, where he laboured energetically in the cause of Liberalism.

LIVERPOOL.—Ullett Road Church again headed the list of collections for the Liverpool Hospital Sunday Fund with collections amounting to £716, against £667 last year. The new buildings erected for the church were presented by the donors—Sir J. T. Brunner, M.P., and Mr. H. Tate—on the 25th ult.

TO commemorate the bi-centenary of Matthew Henry's Church, Chester, two stained-glass windows have been erected, and were unveiled on Friday, January 10th, by Sir John Brunner, M.P. Sir John was presented with a photograph of the windows, enclosed in frames of oak taken from the original roof of the church. The windows bear full-length figures of Matthew Henry and Dr. Martineau.

MANCHESTER COLLEGE, OXFORD. — The annual meeting was held in the Memorial Hall, Manchester, on Thursday, January 16th; W. Colfox, Esq., in the chair. There was a large attendance of trustees. The report of the committee was of a most encouraging nature. There are now 28 students connected with the college, 19 being in residence. The hall of residence has proved an unqualified success. Mr. Colfox was for a third year elected president of the college. The treasurer (Charles Jones, Esq.) was able to present a satisfactory balance sheet. Sympathetic reference was made to the presence of Indian and Japanese students in the college. Dr. Caird, master of Balliol, takes the place of the late Professor Max Muller, as visitor.

Count that day lost whose low descending sun
Views from thy hand no worthy action done.—ANON.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

My Daughters on the Beach.

These lines are by John Richard Green, and are taken from the LETTERS *mentioned on another page. Mr. Leslie Stephen tells us that they refer to the six daughters, when children, of Mr. Stopford Brooke, who was one of Green's oldest and warmest friends, and in whose house he was hospitably and warmly received in periods of illness and depression.*

Pretty rosy legs
Paddling in the waters;
Knees as smooth as eggs,
Belonging to my daughters!
Sixty toes are twiddling
In the sandy ocean,
And six hearts are fiddling
With a child's emotion.
All of them are pushing
Shrimping nets before them:
Thoughts of tea are rushing
Like the sea-waves o'er them;
Tea with shrimps and butter-
Toast and water-cresses;
Hearts in such a flutter
In their holland dresses,
As twelve feet come plashing
Through the briny billow,
See the crabs go splashing
Each to seek its pillow;
And the tiny fishes
That would a-wooing stray
'Gainst their mothers' wishes,
Much frightened, fly away.

* * * * *

O who would not sorrow;
He would be a stock else!
When said Maud, "To-morrow
I shall hunt for cockles."
All the cockles shivered
When they heard her talking;
Closed their shells and quivered,
And gave up their walking.

* * * * *

Then each little maiden
Trotted to her dwelling;
All their baskets laden,
All their bosoms swelling;
Honor led the marching;
Maud came proudly after;
Evelyn walked, arching
Her pretty head, with laughter:
Then was Olive smiling,
Little girl so funny;
Sybil most beguiling;
Smiles as sweet as honey;
Rosalind, whose pleasure
Was to laugh for ever;
In her baby leisure
Touched with sorrow never.

* * * * *

Home they came enraptured,
And arranged the table;
Boiled the shrimps they captured,
Ate while they were able;
Had a romp uproarious
With the chairs and dishes;
Stripped, and took a glorious
Bath like little fishes;
And at last quite cosy
Laid upon the pillow
All their cheeks so rosy—
Dreaming of the billow
And the ripple argent,
Where the foam had motion
On the sandy margent
'Twixt the rocks and ocean,
And of water playing
Round their ankles tiny;
And of next day slaying
Shrimps and urchins spiny;
Crabs and cockles hiding
In the rippled ridges,
And sea-flowers abididng
Underneath rock edges.

* * * * *

So they lay a-dreaming
Pleasures without number;
Till the daylight streaming
Roused them from their slumber.
To the beach and waters
They again descended;
For my six young daughters
Thus my lay is ended.

Frost.

The flowers in the garden
Are very cold at night;
When I look out of windows
Their beds are hard and white.

The primrose and the scilla,
The merry crocus too—
O Jane! if we were flowers,
What should we children do?

We'd have to sleep all naked
Beneath the windy trees;
Yet we should die, I know it,
With even a chemise . . .